

Please type a plus (+) inside this box - ☐

PTO/SB/29 (12/97)

Approved for use through 09/30/00. OMB 0651-0032

Patent and Trademark Office: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

Attorney Docket No.	9997-003	Total Pages	28
First Named Inventor or Application Identifier			
Faber, Scott			
Express Mail Label No.	EM 061 022 234 US		

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 20231

1. ☒ Fee Transmittal Form
Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing) [Total Pages 15]
2. ☒ Specification
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
-Descriptive title of the Invention
-Cross Reference to Related Applications
-Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R&D
-Reference to Microfiche Appendix
-Background of the Invention
-Brief Summary of the Invention
-Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
-Detailed Description of the Invention (including drawings, if filed)
-Claim(s)
-Abstract of the Disclosure
Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) [Total Sheets 9]
3. ☒ Oath or Declaration [Total Sheets 2]
4. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy)
Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
(Note Box 5 below)
i. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33 (b).
5. Incorporation By Reference (useable if Box 4b is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.

6. ☐ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)
 - a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
 - b. ☐ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
 - c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement of Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignee)
10. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
14. ☐ Small Entity Statement filed in prior application, Statement(s) Status still proper and desired
15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
(if foreign priority is claimed)
16. ☐ Other:

17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No. filed.

18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

☒ Customer Number or Bar Code Label

20583
(Insert Customer No. or Attach bar code label here)

☐ Correspondence address below

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

COUNTRY

TELEPHONE

FAX

Burden Hour Statement: This form is estimated to take 0.2 hours to complete. Time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Box Patent Application, Washington, DC 20231.

System for providing services in real-time over the Internet

ABSTRACT

- 5 The present invention is a service provider/customer matching system designed to provide customers with real-time indication of each service provider's state of availability and telephony connectivity. In a preferred embodiment, the invention includes a web site, which stores, updates, and displays service provider information. A customer would, upon accessing this web site, conduct a search for a particular type of service provider and be able
- 10 to tell immediately if one or more service providers matching the search criteria were available at that moment to provide services. After the customer selected a service provider, the customer would have the option of viewing more detailed information about the service provider, sending a message to the service provider if the service provider is not immediately available, or initiating a telephone conversation with the service provider if he
- 15 or she is on call and available. While the call is taking place, the customer would accrue charges on a per minute basis. The service provider would later receive all or part of the accrued charges for that call.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

- 20 The present invention relates generally to electronic commerce using digital and analog networks. More specifically, the present invention relates to a network application for identifying and communicating with service providers and for computing the communication time period and allocating revenue based thereon.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

- Consumers interested in acquiring voice-based services, i.e., services that can be provided over a telephone, must first identify the service provider who is capable of providing the
- 30 required services. At present, this usually means perusing a telephone directory, which can become frustrating and time-consuming if the service providers telephoned are not immediately available. A phone book (whether a bound paper book or an electronic directory) is also not very effective if the service provider's business category is not known.

Over the years, a number of systems have been developed that partially address this problem. In particular, these include systems that attempt to match potential customers with potential service providers. They range from free bulletin-board-style Internet web sites to sophisticated Internet-based consulting services.

5

One such system is similar to an electronic "marketplace." Users submit via the Internet a description of the services they need to an Internet-based "exchange." These descriptions include the subject matter of the requested service, time constraints for service delivery, and the proposed price to be paid for the services. The exchange then identifies potential service providers and facilitates bidding for the job by the selected service providers, some of whom may or may not have been selected previously by the user. Once the service providers' bids have been received by the user, the user sends a full job request to one or more service providers of particular interest. The service providers who remain interested in the proposed work then submit a final bid to the user. This bid may also include the expert's particular qualifications and conditions for accepting the work. After the work has been completed, the expert contacts the exchange for payment. Although this system is beneficial, users still do not immediately know if an expert is available and the response from the expert is neither immediate nor direct.

15

Another prior art system maintains a list of independent professors available for answering questions via the Internet. The system functions as a middleman between the customer and the professors. The customer contacts the system via the Internet with a question. The system then contacts various experts within the appropriate field via the Internet and forwards the customer's question to the experts. Here too, customers do not immediately know if an expert is available, and the response from the expert is not immediate.

20

There is another system that allows users to post via the Internet questions for experts related to specific topical categories. However, there is no guarantee that an expert will answer the question as the user does not pay for the services and the experts are not paid. Again, presuming the expert is willing to answer a question, users do not immediately know if an expert is available and the response from the expert is not immediate nor direct.

30

Another system allows users to post questions to an electronic "bulletin board." Other users, whether expert or not, then provide answers or comments on a voluntary basis. This

35

system, though useful, suffers from many of the same problems as the system described above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 An object of this invention is to provide a system that will: (1) match customers with service providers; (2) provide customers with real-time notification of each of the service provider's state of availability; and (3) permit the customer and an available service provider to communicate with each other in real time.

10 One embodiment includes an Internet web site as part of the delivery mechanism of the invention. Customers who want to purchase services through the web site will register with the web site. Registration can include providing a credit card number for billing purposes. Service providers who offer their services over the web site will register as well. Each
15 service provider's registration information includes a description of the service or services provided, the service provider's qualifications, and information concerning the service provider's fees. The service categories can include any service deliverable over a telephone. Customers will be able to search for and identify one or more service providers who may be able to provide the desired services. Once one or more service providers are identified, the
20 system will also identify which service providers are available to provide immediate services so that customers will know if a particular service provider is available to provide service at that given moment. The customer will also have the option of viewing the credentials or qualifications of the service providers. If a service provider is not available to speak with customers at that moment, the customers can send a message to the service
25 provider through the web site. If, on the other hand, the service provider is immediately available, the customer can initiate a "service call" through the web site with the service provider. In such a case, the computer associated with the web site initiates a telephonic conference call between the service provider and the customer, billing the customer for the duration the conference call at the rate set by the service provider. The service provider
30 then receives all or part of the fees collected from the customer by the web site.

APPLICATION OF THE INVENTION

Peter, a graduate student in economics, happens to be an expert user of a Microsoft Excel.

35 To earn extra money while writing his thesis, Peter decides to post his Excel-help services

on the subject web site, an Internet based implementation of the invention. He registers at the site and lists himself under "Computer Help" and "Excel" at the rate of \$1.00 per minute. During the registration process, Peter provides a brief description of his abilities and includes an Internet link (or "hyperlink") to his on-line resume. Whenever Peter is at home alone studying for long stretches in the evening, he signs on to the subject web site and changes his state of availability to "On Call," or immediately available to receive clients.

Danielle is a management consultant building a regression model on Excel for a large clothing retailer. At midnight in the office, she is having trouble writing a macro on Excel. She goes to the subject web site, browses under "Computer Help" and "Excel" and finds Peter's posting. Peter's credentials appear to match Danielle's need for someone to help her with her Excel macro, and the "light bulb" icon next to Peter's entry indicates that he is "On Call." Danielle clicks on Peter's entry to get his contact information. Since she hasn't used the subject web site before, she is guided through a short registration where she chooses a user name and password and enters her credit-card number. She then initiates contact with Peter. Her telephone rings and automated voice tells her that her call with Peter will be billed to her credit card at \$1.00 per minute. Danielle responds to a prompt to accept the call, and the web site completes the call between Peter and Danielle.

Peter and Danielle talk until her problem is solved, which takes eight minutes. Danielle's credit card is billed for eight dollars. She receives a confirming message via electronic mail notifying her of this, along with a request to evaluate Peter's service, which she does. Peter's web site account is credited for eight dollars minus a fee collected by the web site. Once Peter's web site account has accumulated a surplus of \$50, he receives a check from the web site in the mail. After receiving many positive reviews from online clients such as Danielle, Peter is inundated with Excel-help requests whenever he goes "On Call," enabling him to raise his rates to \$1.50 per minute.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates the system for identifying service providers and connecting customers with service providers in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates an alternative embodiment of the system for identifying service providers and connecting customers with service providers.

5 FIG. 3 illustrates an initial data entry screen in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is an illustration of an exemplary web page providing an entry form for the registration of a service.

10 FIG. 5 is an illustration of an exemplary web page requesting confirmation of information submitted in the service registration form.

FIG. 6 illustrates a window that displays the results of a search for a particular type of service provider in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

15 FIG. 7 illustrates a window that displays a list of service providers available in a particular category in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

20 FIG. 8 illustrates a window that displays a list of service providers available in a particular category, with each service provider's state of availability represented by a color code in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

25 FIG. 9 illustrates a window that displays a list of service providers available in a particular category, with each service provider's state of availability represented by geometric shapes in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 10 illustrates the process by which service providers change their state of availability through the use of a telephone in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

30 FIG. 11 is an illustration of an exemplary web page containing an account sign-on form.

FIG. 12 illustrates a window that displays account information for a particular user or service provider account in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

35

FIG. 13 is an illustration of an exemplary web page providing a customer with the option of engaging the services of the selected service provider.

FIG. 14 illustrates the process by which the controller computer 300 establishes a connection between service providers and customers.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

As shown in FIG. 1, customer computers 100 and service provider computers 200 are connected through a network 500 (such as the Internet) to host computer or web server ("controller computer") 300. Persons skill in the art will recognize that said controller computer 300 may consist of more than one computer working together to provide the controller computer 300 functions described herein. The customers and service providers each have telephones 400 that are connected to the telephone network 600. In FIG. 1, the Internet network 500 and telephone network 600 are shown as two separate entities, though persons skilled in the art will realize that they do overlap. See FIG. 2. Additionally, the controller computer 300 has the functionality of a standard web server, capable of interacting dynamically with service providers and customers. In addition to the standard operation, the controller computer 300 is linked to a telephone interface 700 that enables the controller computer 300 to set up, initiate, confirm, and track conversations between the customers and service providers. The controller computer 300 has the ability to accept phone calls from service providers for the purpose of changing the service provider's state of availability. In accordance with FIG. 1 the computers 100 and 200 are connected to the controller computer 300 by the network 500. Specifically, customers and service providers will use their computers to establish a connection to the Internet network 500. Once a connection has been established, service providers and customers will enter the URL, or Internet address, of the controller computer 300. In a preferred embodiment, customers and service providers will be presented with the web page illustrated in FIG. 3.

Registration is required before customers can purchase services or service providers can offer services on the web site. Customers will be required to provide credit card information, while service providers may or may not submit credit card information. Once the information has been submitted, the data will be stored in the database 310 maintained on the controller computer 300.

In addition to the registration process just discussed, service providers will have to submit information about each service they will provide. In the preferred embodiment, this information will be submitted using the web page illustrated in FIG. 4. In this page, service providers must submit a valid username and password combination 1000, a service title 1010, service description 1020, and price per minute 1030. Service providers will also have to select the desired service area 1040. Once this information has been entered, the Next 1050 hyperlink will be selected. At that time, the controller computer 300 will confirm the username and password combination by comparing the data submitted to data stored in the database 310 maintained on the controller computer 300. If the username and password combination is successfully verified, the service provided is presented with a confirmation screen, which is illustrated in FIG. 5, showing all of the information entered in the previous screen. The service provider will then have the option of going back 1100 to the previous page to edit the information, or submitting 1110 the information. Once submitted, the controller computer 300 will then update the database 310 maintained on the controller computer 300.

Customers will have the option of executing a keyword search 510 for service providers. The keyword search can be executed from the home web page in the preferred embodiment (FIG. 3). Persons skilled in the art will recognize that a keyword search consists of scanning a database for words that match the keywords entered. In this case, the keyword search will be executed against the database 310 maintained on the controller computer 300. In the preferred embodiment, users will view the list of service providers 1200 matching the keyword search criteria on a web page illustrated in FIG. 6. Customers will have the option viewing the service providers 1200 listed according to price 1210, availability 1220, or customer evaluations 1230 in either ascending 1240 or descending 1250 order, as indicated by the web page illustrated in FIG. 6. Persons skilled in the art will recognize that the service providers can be listed in any number of ways. As an alternative to a keyword search, customers can select one of the categories 520 to view a predetermined list of service providers as illustrated in FIG. 3. In a preferred embodiment, users selecting a category will view a web page similar to the illustration in FIG. 7.

In the preferred embodiment, service providers will be in one of three states of availability as indicated in FIG. 7. One state indicates that the service provider is "On Call Now" and immediately available 1300. This state is entered when the service provider is available to provide a service but is not currently doing so. Another state indicates that the service

provider is "On Call Now," but not immediately available 1310. This state is entered when an "On-Call" service provider is providing a service. Another state indicates that the service provider is not "On Call Now" 1320. This means that the service provider is not available to provide services.

Persons skilled in the art will recognize that the availability of the service providers can be represented in a number of ways. FIGS. 7, 8, and 9 are representative of various alternatives. FIG. 7 represents availability with text messages (1300, 1310, 1320). FIG. 8 represents availability with colors 1330. FIG. 9 represents availability with geometric shapes 1340.

In the preferred embodiment, the service provider may change his or her state of availability in two ways. In one way, the service providers will use their telephone 400 (FIG. 1) to communicate with the controller computer 300 through the controller computer's 300 telephone interface 700. First, the service provider dials the appropriate controller computer 300 phone number. Once contact has been established, the service provider enters her username and password 1400 as illustrated in FIG. 10. This can be done using the telephone keypad; or through interaction with voice recognition software. After the controller computer 300 confirms the user name and password combination, the service provider will be given the option of selecting a state of availability 1410. The service provider will be able to select the "On-Call" 1420 or "Off-Call" state 1430 responding to recorded prompts from the controller computer 300. After making a selection, the service provider receives a confirmation announcement 1440.

Service providers can also change their state of availability by using their computer 200 connection to the controller computer 300 through the network 500 (FIG. 1). In addition to allowing the service provider to change his or her state of availability, the following steps will be used by customers and service providers to view their account information. In the preferred embodiment, the service provider or customer can select the "My Account" 530 hyperlink from any web page provided by the controller computer 300 (See FIG. 3 as an example). Once this selection has been made, the service provider or customer will be required to provide a username and password 1500, as illustrated in FIG. 11, before continuing. Note that in the preferred embodiment, users will also have the option of registering by selecting the Register Now 1510 hyperlink. Once the username and password have been entered, the user will select the Submit 1520 hyperlink. After verification of the

username and password by the controller computer 300, the user will, in the preferred embodiment, be presented with the web page illustrated in FIG. 12. In the Services You Are Selling 1600 table, service providers will be able to view a summary of services provided. The service provider will also have the option of toggling his or her state of availability from "On Call" to "Off Call" and vice-versa by selecting the availability 1610 hyperlink. Additionally, the service provider will have the option of deleting some or all of the services currently provided by selecting the Delete 1620 hyperlink. Moreover, the service provider will have the option of viewing the web page illustrated in FIG. 4, and described above, in order to modify the service description by selecting the Alter 1630 hyperlink. Customers and service providers will be given a summary of account activity 1640 on this page as well in the preferred embodiment. This information includes services provided 1660, services purchased 1650, and the current month's billing and payment summary 1670. Finally, customers and service providers will have the option of viewing the previous month's billing and payment summary 1680 as well as the next month's billing and payment summary when not viewing the current month's billing and payment summary.

Once a customer has selected a service provider, he or she will have to begin the process of establishing a link with the selected service provider. In a preferred embodiment, the customer will select a "Call Me" 1800 hyperlink as indicated in Fig. 13. Once this is done, a process illustrated in Fig. 14, is begun. Initially, the controller computer 300 places a telephone call 1900 to the service provider. If the service provider cannot be contacted, the controller computer 300 will telephone the customer 1910 to apologize for the inconvenience. If the service provider answers the telephone, the controller computer 300 will play a message 1920 for the service provider requesting that he or she accept the telephone call. Once the call is accepted by the service provider, the controller computer 300 will place a telephone call to the customer and switch 1930 the service provider's state of availability to "on call" but not immediately available. If the controller computer 300 cannot get through to the customer, it will play a message 1940 for the service provider to inform him or her of the problem and will terminate the telephone call. The controller computer 300 will then switch 1950 the service provider's state of availability back to "On Call" and immediately available. If the controller computer 300 can get through to the customer, it will play a message 1960 for the customer requesting that he or she accept the telephone call. If the customer will not accept the telephone call, the customer computer 300 will play a message 1940 for the service provider to inform him or her of the customer's decision and will terminate the telephone call. The controller computer 300 will then switch

1950 the service provider's state of availability back to "On Call" and immediately available. If the customer does accept the telephone call, the controller computer 300 will link the customer and service provider's telephone calls and begin the telephone call timer 1970 for billing purposes. If the telephone call has not been concluded when only a
5 minute's worth of time is remaining on the customer account (based on the rate charged by the service provider), the controller computer 300 will check 1980 to see if the customer has increased his or her credit or purchased additional time. If the customer has not increased his or her credit or purchased additional time, the controller computer 300 will play a message 1990 for the customer requesting additional credit or payment before the call is
10 terminated. Upon completion of the telephone call between the service provider and the customer, the controller computer 300 will disconnect 2000 the service provider from the customer. The controller computer 300 will play a message 2010 for the service provider to thank the service provider and provide a summary of the transaction. The controller computer 300 will play a message 2020 for the customer to thank the customer and prompt
15 the customer to evaluate the services provided. After the evaluation has been provided, the controller computer 300 will record 2030 the information in the service provider's profile. The controller computer 300 will then record a summary of the transaction in the database 310 maintained on the controller computer 300 and update 2040 the customer's data accordingly. The controller computer 300 will then switch 2050 the service provider's state
20 of availability back to "On Call" and immediately available. The controller computer 300 will then send 2060 summary messages via electronic mail to both the service provider and the customer.

What is claimed is:

- 25 1. A system of matching customers and service providers, facilitating communications between said customers and service providers, and keeping track of said communications for billing purposes, the system comprising:
a communications link between a customer computer and a controller computer, said communications link providing the customer computer with access to a database maintained
30 on the controller computer, said database generating and transmitting to the customer computer a list of service providers corresponding to search criteria provided by said customer computer;
said list of service providers comprising each listed service provider's present state of availability for purposes of providing one-to-one, voice-based services;

said controller computer responding to said customer's selection of a service provider from said list of service providers by initiating a communications link between said customer and said selected service provider;

- 5 said controller computer changing said selected service provider's said present state of availability to reflect when said communications link is initiated and to reflect when said communications link is terminated;

said controller computer tracking the length of time during which said communications link between said customer and said service provider is maintained; and

- 10 said controller computer billing process to secure payment from said customer for maintaining said communications link on a per unit of time basis.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said communications link between a customer computer and said controller computer can be established by said customer computer interacting with said controller computer through a computer network.

- 15 3. The system of claim 1, wherein said communications link between a customer computer and said controller computer can be established by said customer computer interacting with said controller computer through a direct connection with said controller computer.

- 20 4. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to create said list of service providers by conducting a keyword search.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to create
25 said list of service providers grouped according to the service provided.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to sort and display said list of service providers according to their state of availability.

- 30 7. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to sort and display said list of service providers according to the price charged by said service providers.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to sort and display said list of service providers according to each of said service provider's customer evaluations.

5 9. The system of claim 1, wherein said customers can direct the manner in which said controller computer will sort and display said list of service providers.

10 10. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can select the manner in which said controller computer will sort and display said list of service providers

11 11. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to indicate and display each of said service provider's state of availability by color.

12 12. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to indicate
15 and display each of said service provider's state of availability by geometric shapes.

13 13. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to indicate and display each of said service provider's state of availability by text messages.

20 14. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit said service providers to have one or more of several states of availability.

15 15. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit said service providers to have a separate and different state of availability for each service
25 provided.

16 16. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit said service providers to select a state of availability for each registered service.

30 17. The system of claim 16, wherein said controller computer can be directed to require that each of said service providers submit to said controller computer a password before said controller computer will allow each of said service providers to direct said controller computer to update each of said service provider's state of availability.

35

03/14/2010 10:00:00

18. The system of claim 16, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit each of said service providers to update each of said service provider's state of availability through a direct telephone connection with the controller computer.

5 19. The system of claim 16, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit each of said service providers to update each of said service provider's state of availability through a computer network connection with the controller computer.

20. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to update
10 each of said service providers' state of availability based on each of said service provider's use of the system.

21. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit each of said service providers to set the rate at which each of said service provider's
15 customers are charged for said length of time said communications link is maintained.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein said controller computer can be directed to permit each of said service providers to set a separate rate at which each of said service provider's customers are charged for said length of time said communications link is maintained for
20 each type of service provided.

23. The system of claim 1, wherein said communications link between said customer and said selected service provider comprises a connection between a communications device associated with said selected service provider and a communications device
25 associated with said customer.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein said communications device comprises a telephone.

30 25. The system of claim 23, wherein said communications device comprises an interactive television.

26. The system of claim 23, wherein said communications device comprises a wireless radio receiver and transmitter.

35

27. The system of claim 1, wherein once a service provider is selected from said list of service providers, said controller computer is directed to set up, initiate, confirm, and track said communications link between said customer and said selected service provider.

5 28. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer initiates a telephone connection with said selected service provider to establish said communications link.

29. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer can initiate a telephone connection with said customer to establish said communications link.

10

30. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer can initiate a telephone connection with an intermediate party to establish said communications link with said customer.

15 31. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer will notify either said customer or said service provider prior to terminating the attempted said communications link if the other party to said communication link cannot be contacted.

32. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer will convey to each party
20 of said communications link the length of time spent maintaining said communications link at the conclusion of said communications link.

33. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer will convey to each party to said communications link the cost of maintaining said communications link at the
25 conclusion of said communications link.

34. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer can be directed to credit a customer account for advance payments received in connection with said customer account.

30 35. The system of claim 34, wherein said controller computer can be directed to interrupt said communications link should the prepaid amount relating to said customer account fall to a preset minimum level and to request that said customer provide additional payment for said account or, in the event payment is not received within a preset time period, to terminate said communications link.

35

36. The system of claim 27, wherein said controller computer can be directed to credit a customer account in advance for services provided by said service providers.

37. The system of claim 36, wherein said controller computer can be directed to interrupt said communications link should the cost of said communications link approach to within a preset amount of credit relating to said customer account and to request that said customer establish additional credit for said account or, in the event additional credit is not established within a preset time period, to terminate said communications link.

38. The system of claim 1, wherein said controller computer can be directed to request that said customer evaluate the services provided by said service provider following each of said communications links with said service provider.

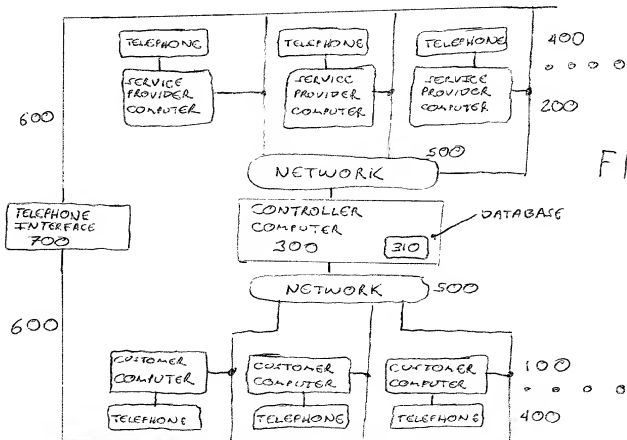
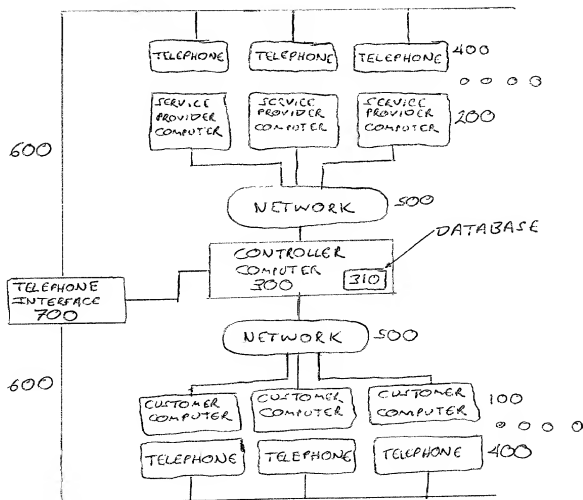
39. The system of claim 1, wherein the customer will be able to send a message to said service providers who are not immediately available.


40. The system of claim 1, wherein said service providers must register their services with said controller computer before being made accessible by said customers.

41. The system of claim 40, wherein said service providers will be required to submit a title, description, and cost for each of said services provided.

42. The system of claim 1, wherein said customers must register with said controller computer before being able to access said service providers.

43. The system of claim 1, wherein said service providers may register to provide more than one type of service.





Correct to Everyone

[Home](#)
[Sell Your Services](#)
[My Account](#)
[Help](#)

Search:


510

- Lawyers
- Computer Helpers
- Tax Advisors
- Psychologists 520
- AcademicTutors
- Relationship Advisors
- Psychics
- Other

HOW IT WORKS:

Instructions and Explanations and
Instructions and Explanations and
Instructions and Explanations and
Instructions and Explanations and
Instructions and Explanations and
Instructions and Explanations and
Instructions and Explanations and

FIG. 3



Correct to Everyone

[Home](#)
[Sell Your Services](#)
[My Account](#)
[Help](#)

List Your Services

You must be registered at the site to list your services. Click here to [register now](#) -- it's free!

Username 1000 Password

Service Title 1010

Category (please choose just one) e.g. 10-Tech Patent Lawyer

Lawyers <input type="button" value="intermediate"/>	1020	Academic Tutors <input type="button" value="not selected"/>
Computer Helpers <input type="button" value="not selected"/>		Relationship Advisors <input type="button" value="not selected"/>
Tax Advisors <input type="button" value="not selected"/>		Psychics <input type="button" value="not selected"/>
Psychologists <input type="button" value="not selected"/>		Other <input type="button" value="not selected"/>

Service Description (HTML ok) 1030

Price per minute 1040

1050

FIG. 4



Home Sell Your Services My Account Help

Confirm Your Listing Information

Phone number you would like customer calls routed to

Email address you would like customers directed to

Address your earnings will be sent to Ben Salsbury
49 Peachwood Lane
Denver, CO 76534
[Click here to change](#)

Service Title International Law Expert Price per minute \$2.99

Category Legal International

Description I am an associate partner at the firm of Hillary, Natrook, Reball, and Leek. I have 12 years of experience in International Law, with focus upon France and the Netherlands. [Click here for my resume](#)

photograph

1100 1110

FIG. 5



Home Sell Your Services My Account Help

Search Results

Search:

Sort by: ▼

Feedback Rating 1220

On-Call Status 1230

Ascending ● 1240

Descending ● 1250

1200

DESCRIPTION	Price per min.	On Call Now*
Legal Advice for Expatriate	4.99	Yes
Europe-US Legal Specialist	2.99	Yes, but on the phone
Offshore-Business Corporate Lawyer	4.99	No (Send email)
Asia-Pacific Law Specialist	1.99	No (Send email)

FIG. 6



Home Sell Your My Help
Services Account

Lawyers

List yourself here

DESCRIPTION	Price per min.	On Call Now?	
<u>International Law Expert</u>	4 99	Yes	1300
<u>High-Tech Patent Attorney</u>	3 99	Yes	
<u>Personal Injury Expert</u>	2 99	Yes, but on the phone	1310
<u>Corporate Mergers Advisor</u>	4 99	No (Send email)	1320
<u>Experienced Divorce Settler</u>	1 99	No (Send email)	

FIG. 7



Home Sell Your My Help
Services Account

Lawyers

List yourself here

DESCRIPTION	Price per min.	On Call Now?	
<u>International Law Expert</u>	4 99	Green	1330
<u>High-Tech Patent Attorney</u>	3 99	Green	1330
<u>Personal Injury Expert</u>	2 99	Yellow	1330
<u>Corporate Mergers Advisor</u>	4 99	Red	1330
<u>Experienced Divorce Settler</u>	1 99	Red	1330

FIG. 8



Home Sell Your My Help
Services Account

Lawyers

List yourself here






DESCRIPTION	Price per min.	On Call Now?	
<u>International Law Expert</u>	4 99		1340
<u>High-Tech Patent Attorney</u>	3 99		1340
<u>Personal Injury Expert</u>	2 99	Yes,  on the phone	1340
<u>Corporate Mergers Advisor</u>	4 99	No (See  email)	1340
<u>Experienced Divorce Settler</u>	1 99	No (See  email)	1340

FIG. 9

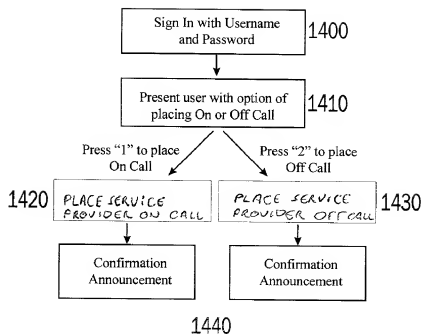


FIG. 10



Home Sell Your My Help
Services Account

To view your Account Information, please sign in:

Username Password
1500
 1620

You must be registered at the site to have an Account. Click here to [register now](#) -- it's free!
1510

FIG. 11



Home Sell Your My Help
Services Account

Your Account

To change your credit-card and personal-address information, [click here](#)

Services You Are Selling 1600

Title	Category	Price per min	On Call now?	Change Listing
International Law Expert	Legal International	\$3.99	No Put me "On Call"	Delete Alter
General Legal Advice	Legal General	\$2.99	Yes Take me "Off Call"	Delete Alter

Create New Listing 1610 1620 1630

Account Activity, October 1999 1640

Title	Category	Price per min	Time Began	Total Time	Earnings
General Legal Advice	Legal General	\$2.99	8/05/99 9:12	12 min	\$35.88
General Legal Advice	Legal General	\$2.99	8/13/99 11:57	8 min	\$23.92

Services Sold 1670 Total Earnings \$59.80

Title	Category	Price per min	Time Began	Total Time	Cost
Excel Spreadsheet Help	Computer Help Excel	\$9.99	8/17/99 11:02	8 min	\$7.92
Computer Modem Help	Computer Help Modem	\$19.99	8/14/99 20:08	14 min	\$21.00

Total Purchases \$28.92

Total October Earnings \$59.80

Total October Purchases \$28.92

October Balance \$30.88

Surplus from Previous Month \$17.68

Account Balance \$48.56

1680

[Click here for Previous Month's Activity](#)

1670

Amount to be sent to you in the mail \$48.56
Amount charged to your credit card \$0.00

FIG. 12



Home Sell Your My Help
Services Account

How to contact: International Law Expert

When you press the "Call Me" button below, Ether.com will immediately call you at the phone number you have previously entered:

202-732-8375

If this is not the phone number where you would like to be called now, please type the correct one in the box.

If you are presently using this phone line as a dial-up connection to the Internet, select the checkbox below. We will then wait sixty seconds before calling you, giving you time to sign off your online connection.

I'm using this phone line now-- wait 60 seconds before calling me ☐

This call will be billed to your credit card at the rate of \$4.99 per minute.

Billing will only start when the service provider is on the line.

1800



FIG. 13

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below at 201 et seq. underneath my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor if only one name is listed at 201 below, or an original, first and joint inventor if plural names are listed at 201 et seq. below, of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

System for providing services in real-time over the Internet

and for which a patent application:

- ☒ is attached hereto and includes amendment(s) filed on (if applicable)
☐ was filed in the United States on as Application No. (for disclosure not accompanying applications)
 with amendment(s) filed on (if applicable)
☐ was filed as PCT international Application No. on and was amended under PCT Article 19 on (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified application, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119(a)-(d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

EARLIEST FOREIGN APPLICATION(S), IF ANY, FILED PRIOR TO THE FILING DATE OF THE APPLICATION			
APPLICATION NUMBER	COUNTRY	DATE OF FILING (day, month, year)	PRIORITY CLAIMED
			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

APPLICATION SERIAL NO.	FILING DATE	STATUS		
		PATENTED	PENDING	ABANDONED

POWER OF ATTORNEY. As a named inventor, I hereby appoint S. Leslie Misrock (Reg. No. 18872), Harry C. Jones, III (Reg. No. 20280), Berj A. Terzian (Reg. No. 20060), Gerald J. Flintoff (Reg. No. 20823), David Weid, III (Reg. No. 21094), Jonathan A. Marshall (Reg. No. 24614), Barry D. Rein (Reg. No. 22411), Stanton T. Lawrence, III (Reg. No. 25736), Charles E. McKeeney (Reg. No. 22795), Philip T. Shannon (Reg. No. 24278), Francis E. Morris (Reg. No. 24615), Charles E. Miller (Reg. No. 24576), Gidon D. Stern (Reg. No. 27469), John J. Lauter, Jr. (Reg. No. 27814), Brian M. Possant (Reg. No. 28462), Brian D. Coggio (Reg. No. 27624), Rory J. Radding (Reg. No. 28749), Stephen J. Harbulak (Reg. No. 29166), Donald J. Goodell (Reg. No. 19766), James N. Palik (Reg. No. 25510), Thomas E. Friebe (Reg. No. 29258), Laura A. Coruzzi (Reg. No. 30742), Jennifer Gordon (Reg. No. 30753), Jon R. Stark (Reg. No. 30111), Allan A. Fanucci (Reg. No. 30256), Geraldine F. Baldwin (Reg. No. 31232), Victor N. Balancia (Reg. No. 31231), Samuel B. Abrams (Reg. No. 30605), Steven J. Wallach (Reg. No. 35402), Marcia H. Sundeen (Reg. No. 30893), Paul J. Zegger (Reg. No. 33821), Edmond R. Bannon (Reg. No. 32110), Bruce J. Barker (Reg. No. 33291), Adriane M. Antler (Reg. No. 32605), Thomas G. Rowan (Reg. No. 34419), James G. Markey (Reg. No. 31636), Thomas D. Kohler (Reg. No. 32797), Scott D. Stimpson (Reg. No. 33607), Gary S. Williams (Reg. No. 31066), William S. Galliam (Reg. No. 33885), Ann L. Gisolfi (Reg. No. 31956), Todd A. Wagner (Reg. No. 35399), Scott B. Familant (Reg. No. 35504), Warren S. Heit (Reg. No. 36828), Kelly D. Talcott (Reg. No. 39582), and Mark A. Farley (Reg. No. 33170) and, all of Pennie & Edmonds LLP, whose addresses are 1155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10036, 1667 K Street N.W., Washington, DC 20006 and 3300 Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304, and each of them, my attorneys, to prosecute this application, and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:		PENNIE & EDMONDS LLP 1155 Avenue of the Americas New York, N.Y. 10036-2711		DIRECT TELEPHONE CALLS TO PENNIE & EDMONDS LLP DOCKETING (212) 790-2803	
2 0 1	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	STREET	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP CODE
2 0 2	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	STREET	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP CODE
2 0 3	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	STREET	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP CODE
2 0 4	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	STREET	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP CODE
2 0 5	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	STREET	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP CODE
2 0 6	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	STREET	CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP CODE

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true, and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon

SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 201	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 202	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 203
DATE	DATE	DATE
SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 204	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 205	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 206
DATE	DATE	DATE